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Trust that man in nothing who has not a conscience in everything.

Lawrence Sterne, Irish novelist

The world exists on trust. Without trust, suspicion reigns. We trust that other drivers will follow the rules of the road; we trust that doctors will provide the best available care for their patients; we trust that a refrigerator will work as advertised; we trust that the food served in a restaurant is safe to eat. And we trust the promises that our politicians have made, often years and decades ago.

As I understand it, the budget that the governor has proposed includes saving \$70 million by cutting from Teachers' Retiree Healthcare. He eliminates the state's share of retiree health costs and municipal retiree health subsidy and requires the TRB health fund to cover those contributions.

This seems patently like a breach of the trust which retired teachers have placed in their elected officials over the years. Indeed, the State may, like all of us, be in difficult financial straits. The need to act is compelling; the need to balance the deficit on the backs of retired teachers is unconscionable.

Retroactively penalizing those of us who live on incomes that are basically fixed, with only minimal cost-of-living adjustments, strikes me as a breach of faith and the politically motivated posturing of an elected official who lacks both empathy and conscience.

I would strongly urge you to resist strongly the easy solution to the State's budget woes. What lesson does this action provide to new, upcoming teachers who plan for their retirement based on the promises that they are given? Who would remain in an education system manipulated by politicians who feel no compunction about adding to the financial burden of their retired forebears? And, ultimately, what does such an action teach our students about the reliability and trustworthiness of politicians who throw the aged and needful under the bus of political expediency?